

**STATE ARCHIVES OF MICHIGAN  
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**NATURALIZATION RECORDS**

The Naturalization Act of 1802 established the three-part naturalization process which remains in effect today. Aliens must declare their intention to become a citizen, observe a required residence period, and then petition an authorized court for admission to citizenship. In character, this process is both judicial (occurring before and by order of a court) and administrative (being under the supervision of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice).

Initially, the alien files a Declaration of Intention with an authorized court, indicating his or her intention to become a citizen, to renounce all allegiance to any foreign state, and to renounce any foreign title or order of nobility. Then, at least two years after making this declaration (but, after 1906, no more than seven years later), an alien who has been a resident of the United States for at least five years may petition the court for admission to citizenship (since 1941, the requirements to file a Declaration of Intention has been abolished and the residency record shortened for the spouses of citizens). This Petition includes both the applicant's oath and the affidavits of two witnesses who attest to the residency and good character of the petitioner. Finally, if the petition is accepted, the court issues an order admitting the individual to citizenship.

The Basic Naturalization Act of 1906 (passed June 29 and effective October 1) established the Immigration and Naturalization Service, more precisely defined administrative procedures, and provided for federal supervision over the naturalization process. Prior to that time, naturalization could occur in any federal court or any state court of record operating only under the very general requirements of federal law. Since October, 1906, uniform and considerably more detailed requirements for naturalization, including the form and contents of related records, have been specified by federal statute and promulgated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Researchers using naturalization records will find relatively few early entries for women. From 1866 until the passage of the Married Woman's Act in 1922, citizenship was automatically conferred on the wife of any male citizen. Since then, women have been required to be naturalized in their own right.

**NATURALIZATION RECORDS**

The declarations, oaths, and petitions are mainly loose papers that were filed with the court. As their name implies, the declarations represent a written statement of someone's desire to become a U.S. citizen. The oaths are statements whereby those intending to become U.S. citizens renounce any allegiance to other countries or sovereigns.

Other oaths are from individuals who swear that they have known the petitioner for a given period of time and can vouch for his or her good character. Finally, the petitions from aspiring citizens are formal requests to be granted status after all prerequisites have been met. These materials are arranged chronologically. When all of the documents are bound together, they are filed under the most recent date shown.

## DECLARATIONS OF INTENTION

Prior to 1907, the declarations of intention provide date, name of individual, and country of origin. After 1906, the forms give in addition such facts as age, occupation, race, complexion, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, distinctive marks, date of birth, residence, date and place of embarkation, means of transportation to the U.S., port of arrival, and oath. Alphabetical name indexes are at the front of each volume.

## PETITION AND RECORD

Before 1907, the petition and record offers only date, name of individual, country of origin, names of witnesses, and oath. After 1906, the forms also provide residence, occupation, date and place of birth, date and place of emigration, means of travel to U.S., date and place of immigration, date and place declaration filed, names of spouse and children, their places of birth and residence, length of time in Michigan, names of witnesses, plus their occupations and residence. Alphabetical name indexes are at the front of each volume.

## COURT ORDERS

The court orders are documents prepared twice a year that identify those persons who have qualified for U.S. citizenship. These papers are the judge's order granting petitions for naturalization, and simply list date and name of individual.

## CERTIFICATES OF NATURALIZATION

Certificates of naturalization give number, name, age, date of transaction, place and date where declaration of intention filed, date and place where petition filed, date and place where order filed, and residence of each.

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>RECORD GROUP</u>	<u>COMPUTER INDEX</u>
Allegan	1850-1956	RG 94-342	X
Arenac	1883-1956	RG 99-10	X
Antrim	1863-1955	RG 2002-60	
Bay	1858-1966	RG 94-417	X
Calhoun	1892-1980	RG 91-270	X
Charlevoix	1855-1956	RG 90-173	X
Chippewa	1847-1985	RG 96-217	X
Clare	1872-1901	RG 99-77	
Crawford	1879-1964	RG 2000-40	
Delta	1866-1955	RG 98-50	
Dickinson	1891-1970	RG 96-218	
Eaton	1915-1929	RG 80-120	X
	1836-1959	RG 2002-17	
Genesee	1838-1931	RG 81-44	X
	1931-1965	RG 90-296	X
Gladwin	1874-1964	RG 81-56	X
Gogebic	1887-1980	RG 90-182	
Grand Traverse	1853-1980	RG 99-49	
Gratiot	1857-1956	RG 94-341	X
Hillsdale	1846-1930	RG 85-09	X
Huron	1864-1961	RG 96-227	

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>RECORD GROUP</u>	<u>COMPUTER INDEX</u>
Ingham	1845-1931	RG 83-52	X
	1896-1985	RG 90-168	X
Ionia	1835-1959	RG 85-32	X
Iosco	1859-1974	RG 94-378	
Iron	1881-1956	RG 96-216	
Kalamazoo	1840-1967	RG 94-343	WMU Archives
Kent	1860-1929	RG 89-28	
Keweenaw	1862-1954	RG 96-219	X
Lake	1872-1955	RG 2000-71	
Lapeer	1840-1956	RG 98-63	
Lenawee	1853-1963	RG 2002-26	
Luce	1887-1929	RG 82-116	X
	1929-1956	RG 94-379	
Mackinac	1821-1964	RG 98-48	X
Macomb	1820-1983	RG 97-78	
Manitou	1870-1894	RG 75-70	
Marquette	1852-1971	RG 89-467	
Mason	1870-1969	RG 99-25	
Mecosta	1859-1956	RG 90-274	X
Monroe	1849-1929	RG 84-87	X
Montcalm	1852-1955	RG 82-134	X
Muskegon	1850-1941	RG 84-119	X
	1929-1980	RG 94-302	
Newaygo	1855-1966	RG 99-82	
Ontonogon	1851-1953	RG 2002-61	
Ottawa	1852-1962	RG 2000-72	
Otsego	1879-1956	RG 2000-04	
Saginaw	1852-1966	RG 89-77	X
Saint Clair	1843-1982	RG 94-301	
Sanilac	1850-1964	RG 94-267	
Tuscola	1857-1965	RG 90-70	X
Washtenaw	1830-1985	RG 90-278 & 96-226	X
Wayne	1837-1935, 1942	RG 85-36	

In addition to county circuit courts, naturalization papers could also be filed with the Federal district courts in Michigan. Unless of recent origin, these records can be found at the Great Lakes Regional Branch of the National Archives, 7358 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60629, telephone 312-581-7816. At this repository one can find the following Michigan materials:

#### **Eastern District**

Detroit

Indexes: 1837-1906

Declarations of Intention: 1837-1964

Petitions: 1837-1959

**Western District**

Marquette

Indexes: 1887-1915

Declarations of Intention: 1887-1909

Petitions: 1888-1915

**Grand Rapids**

Indexes: 1907-1930

Declarations of Intention: 1907-1927

Petitions: 1907-1930

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURTS****EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN**

200 East Liberty  
Room 120  
Post Office Box 8199  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107  
734-741-2380

1000 Washington Avenue  
Room 120  
Post Office Box X913  
Bay City, MI 48707  
517-894-8800

231 West LaFayette Street  
Fifth Floor  
Detroit, MI 48226-2797  
313-234-5005

140 Federal Building  
600 Church Street  
Flint, MI 48502  
810-766-5020

526 Water Street  
Port Huron, MI 48060  
810-984-2055

**WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN**

452 Federal Building  
110 Michigan Street NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
616-456-2381

B-35 Federal Building  
410 West Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
616-349-2922

113 Federal Building  
315 West Allegan  
Lansing, MI 48933  
517-377-1559

Post Office Box 698  
229 Federal Building  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906-226-2021